

true start-ups

Cmarchuska Stylish ECO Fashion made in the us



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CMARCHUSKA | New York (NY) | USA
« Hip Green Fashion Label Made in the US »

Christine Marchuska summarizes her label CMARCHUSKA's mission to provide some stylish yet affordable fashion for modern eco-conscious girls and ladies like her.

But it is also the story behind CMARCHUSKA that makes it so unique. After being laid-off from a well-paid finance job on Wall Street in May 2008 Christine literally turned her life around and established her green fashion label only six months later. This is quite impressive and made us decide to interview Christine. We want to share her story, early struggles, lessons learned and her advice to other start-ups with you. So, please have a look at what she has told us to see if you will get inspired.

How did it all start and was it really that easy to find a niche and just go for it?

Christine says that she really liked her previous job. But that thinking about it now she – as many other entrepreneurs report as well – kind of always felt the desire deep inside her to someday become an entrepreneur. A wish that might in her case have been influenced by her entrepreneurial family background. So when the going got tough end of 2007 she started discussing fallback options with Justin, one of her elder brothers. And when she was finally laid-off in May 2008 she pursued the organic fashion brand idea to move forward and start her own business.

But why fashion and what was her industry specific knowledge on day 1?

Christine said she simply tried to combine her passion for the environment and fashion and make it a business. She had realized that there was not much affordable eco-friendly fashion for women like her. You either had to sacrifice on money or style so she saw a niche to be filled

by her brand. Of course, it is not that easy to simply identify a need and come up with an answer. You need to take action. Realizing she had some homework to do, Christine signed up for some sewing classes and bought many books as well as other materials to learn all about the garment industry. She literally started from scratch. But asked if she would do things differently looking back she says no. It is a learning by doing exercise to become an entrepreneur and one thing leads to the other. Maybe sometimes things weren't always handled the optimal way but she made no major mistakes. And finally she is running a one-woman show, thus there are so many things to think of.

What was the biggest challenge and how important was the establishment of contacts and networks for her work?

To have a network of insiders to occasionally pick their brains is very important. In such context the sewing classes also proved very helpful in so far she was able to meet like-minded people that were willing to share and exchange their knowledge. Apart from that she had a key contact back from Cornell University that helped her a lot in finding her way into the fashion industry, which is very closed off. It is not so easy to walk straight in and network as people don't want to share for various reasons. But once you have established your network it feels great as you can share your experiences and provide temporary uplift to one another, pick other brains etc.

What does she like best about her new job?

To meet so many inspiring people with a diverse background is a pure plus of her new life. You meet so many talented individuals and amazing people. To be able to work in such a diverse and broadminded environment is very refreshing and creative.

What has been the most exciting moment so far?

Besides being picked by the Green Fashion Showroom in New York, she says she was really proud of her first fashion show in April this year. But every win, every single step and milestone gets you excited as you put so much of yourself into your work.

Would she like to go back into finance once the job market gets better again?

Christine says that she would rather get a second job to earn her living than going back into finance. She says it is kind of tough to run a one-woman show. But she has so much fun running the show from A to Z. The great press as such doesn't pay your bills and the income needs to flow. On the other hand it is still so exciting. Every day brings something new and you just see what's up next and do it. Thus, she would rather opt for continuing her entrepreneurial adventure.

What's her plan for CMARCHUSKA's future?

In five years from now Christine would love to own her own manufacturing facilities and to move the jobs to upstate New York to give back to the local community and create new employment up there.

What's her recommendation for other young entrepreneurs and their ups and downs?

« Try not to quit before the miracle happens » – her favorite quote.

Isn't that a great and inspiring story of young entrepreneurship at its best? If you were recently laid-off and struggle with what to do next why not ask yourself what you truly want in life? We particularly like Christine's entrepreneurial spirit as she says she has never been afraid of failure, but afraid of not living out her dreams.

But go and see for yourself.

Enjoy!

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